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AN ANALYSIS OF ETHNIC CHARACTERISTICS AND ATTRIBUTIONS OF SUCCESS
AND FAILURE ON ATTITUDES TOWARD READING AND ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION

The University of Oklahoma

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AN ANALYSIS OF ETHNIC CHARACTERISTICS AND ATTRIBUTIONS
OF SUCCESS AND FAILURE ON ATTITUDES TOWARD READING
AND ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION

A DISSERTATION
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1979

AN ANALYSIS OF ETHNIC CHARACTERISTICS AND ATTRIBUTIONS
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
LIST OF TABLES	vi
 CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM.	1
<div style="padding-left: 40px;"> Introduction Statement of the Problem Purpose of the Study Statement of Hypotheses Definition of Terms Assumptions Limitations of the Study Overview of Subsequent Chapters Summary </div>	
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE.	15
<div style="padding-left: 40px;"> Attitudes Attitudes and Achievement Attitudes and Teaching Methods Attitudes and Sex Differences Attitudes and Socioeconomic Levels Attitudes and Interest Attitudes and Personality Attribution Theory Achievement Motivation and Causal Attribution Attributions, Achievement Motivation, and Reading Summary </div>	
III. DESIGN AND PROCEDURES	62
<div style="padding-left: 40px;"> Setting and Sample Testing Procedures . Instruments Utilized Analysis of Data </div>	

TABLE OF CONTENTS (CON'T)

	Page
IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	74
Summary of Findings	
Testing Hypotheses Ho ₁ , Ho ₂ , Ho ₃ , Ho ₄	
Testing Hypotheses Ho ₅ , Ho ₆ , Ho ₇ , Ho ₈	
Testing Hypotheses Ho ₉ , Ho ₁₀ , Ho ₁₁ , Ho ₁₂	
V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	85
Summary	
Conclusions	
Recommendations	
Recommendations for Teachers	
Recommendations for Teacher Educators	
Recommendations for Researchers	
BIBLIOGRAPHY.	92
APPENDICES.	99
Appendix A	
Appendix B	

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Classification Scheme for the Perceived Determinants of Achievement Behavior.....	45
2.	Causal Attributes of Success and Failure...	45
3.	Means and Standard Deviations of Attitude Scores for Organized Reading in the Classroom When Grouped by Ethnicity.....	76
4.	Means and Standard Deviations for Attribution Scores to Ability or Effort in a Success Situation When Grouped by Ethnicity.....	76
5.	Means and Standard Deviations of Attribution Scores to Ability or Effort in a Failure Situation When Grouped by Ethnicity.....	77
6.	ANOVA Summary Comparing Interaction of Ethnicity, Attributions of Success, Attributions of Failure and Attitudes Toward Organized Reading in the Classroom.....	77
7.	Means and Standard Deviations of Attitude Scores for General Reading When Grouped by Ethnicity	79
8.	Means and Standard Deviations for Attributions Made in Successful Reading Situations and Attitudes Toward Reading in General When Grouped by Ethnicity.....	79
9.	Means and Standard Deviations for Attributions Made in Failure Reading Situations and Attitudes Toward Reading in General When Grouped by Ethnicity.....	80
10.	ANOVA Summary Comparing Interaction Dimensions of Ethnicity, Attributions of Success, Attributions of Failure and Attitudes Toward Reading in General.....	80
11.	Means and Standard Deviations of Achievement Motivation Scores When Grouped by Ethnicity.	82

LIST OF TABLES (CON'T)

Table		Page
12.	Means and Standard Deviations of Attributions of Success, Attributions of Failure and Attitudes Toward Reading in General..	82
13.	Means and Standard Deviations for Attributions Made in a Failure Reading Situation and Achievement Motivation When Subjects are Grouped by Ethnicity.....	83
14.	ANOVA Summary Comparing Interaction Dimensions of Ethnicity, Attributions of Success, Attributions of Failure and Achievement Motivation	83

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ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM

Introduction

Many educators acknowledge the important role that reading plays in an individual's life. Not only does reading influence one's academic success, but it affects one's attitudes and habits long after he or she has left school. To want to read and to like to read is the ultimate goal that teachers and teachers of reading hope to instill in their students. It is the latter which indicates that mastery of the reading process has, in fact, been fulfilled.

Because of the significant relationship between reading ability and academic success, educators and researchers focus their attention on the mastery of the necessary reading skills to learn to read. The effect of the affective domain on learning to read has received only

incidental attention. A review of the literature reveals that only a portion of the reading process receives the majority of attention in research and in the classroom.

The affective domain is the basis for learning to read. However, Ransom,¹ Veatch,² and Hittleman³ do not include a chapter on attitudes in their college textbooks on reading. Lapp and Flood⁴ and Alexander⁵ do include chapters on attitudes in their textbooks. The latter view attitudes toward reading as the basis for learning to read.

Strickler and Ellen view attitudes as a viable part of the reading process. They stress the importance of their development and call attention to the need for teachers to foster positive attitudes toward reading. Strickler and Eller state:

. . . while the development of children's reading skills is unquestionably one of the teacher's major responsibilities, an equally

¹Grayce A. Ransom, Preparing to Teach Reading, (Boston: Little, Brown, 1978).

²Jeannett Veatch, Reading in the Elementary School, (New York: Wiley and Son, 1966).

³Daniel Hittleman, Developmental Reading: A Psycholinguistic Prospective, (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1978).

⁴Diane Lapp and James Flood, Teaching Reading to Every Child, (New York: Macmillan, 1978).

⁵J. Estill Alexander, ed. Teaching Reading, (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979).

important responsibility is the development of positive attitudes toward reading and life long interests in reading⁶

Other authors go further still, acknowledging that reading involves more than the cognitive ability to decode and comprehend the printed page. It also involves aspects of the affective domain. As Irene Athey states:

. . . the intellectual variables involved in reading do not operate in isolation, but are modified by the individual's attitudinal and personality characteristics.⁷

Researchers divide the affective domain into various categories. Mathewson identifies values, beliefs, interests, and attitudes⁸ while Alexander and Filler highlight attitudes, self concepts, and interests as some of the components in the affective domain. Underlying attitudes is motivation. If we can measure or determine a student's attitude toward reading, we then can use that knowledge to motivate the student to read. The belief that motivation underlies

⁶Darryl Strickler and William Eller, "Attitudes and Interest," in Reading: Foundational and Instructional Strategies, ed. Pose Lamb and Richard Arnold (California: Wadsworth, 1976), p. 450.

⁷Irene Athey, "Reading Research in the Affective Domain," in Theoretical Models and Process of Reading, 2d. edited by Harry Singer and Robert Rudell (Newark: International Reading Assoc., 1976), p. 655.

⁸Grover C. Mathewson, "The Function of Attitudes in The Reading Process," in Theoretical Models and Process of Reading, 2d. edited by Harry Singer and Robert Rudell (Newark: International Reading Assoc., 1976), p. 655.

⁹J. Estill Alexander and Ronald C. Filler, Attitudes and Reading, (Newark: International Reading Assoc., 1976).

attitude is, as Cofer and Apply state, ". . . largely an assertion of faith that it is useful to conceive of attitudes as motivational variables."¹⁰

Still the fact remains that many people, although they possess the cognitive skills necessary to read, are not reading, do not want to read, or are reading only what is necessary. The question "Why?" must certainly be asked. The research on attitudes in reading and their relationship to achievement, to interest, to socioeconomic level, to ethnic differences, and to other variables does not provide us with an answer to this question. One reason may be that attitude research viewed this area too narrowly in the past. Perhaps factors other than those previously investigated may have a greater effect upon attitudes than believed.

In addition, little of the research on attitudes has focused upon individuals' perceptions of what they think about themselves in relation to reading attitudes. Although many of the attitude scales purport to penetrate this indirectly, whether they actually do is uncertain.

¹⁰C. N. Cofer and M. H. Apply, Motivation: Theory and Research, (New York: Wiley and Sons, 1965), p. 805.

The concept of causality may very well contribute to students' favorable or unfavorable attitudes toward reading. If students view the skill areas of reading as the "be-all and end-all" of the reading process and if, for some students, skills are easy or difficult in their acquisition, those students may well give meaning to those skills as the cause of their likes or dislikes toward reading. The study of causality and its effect upon achievement centers on the idea of attribution. Heider, the father of attribution theory, notes that an important part of an individual's cognitive structure is an individual's perception of causality. Although these perceptions may not be true as far as objective reality is concerned, the individual's behavior is based on his or her perception of that reality.¹¹

Based on Heider's theory, Bernard Weiner, one of the leading advocates of attribution theory, has raised the question: to what do individuals attribute success and failure? He has postulated that success and failure do not just depend on one's actual objective achievement, but success and failure depend also on what one's expectation may be in a particular situation. He also sees past performance as one of the major factors

¹¹F. Heider, The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations, (New York: Wiley, 1958).

affecting a person's future expectancy of success and failure. For example, an individual examines previous experiences in a particular setting and then makes future predictions of success and failure based on past performances in those situations.

Weiner identified four causal factors on which people base their predictions: ability, effort, task difficulty and luck. He further differentiated these four causal factors into stable and unstable dimensions. Ability and task difficulty are considered stable because they do not vary over time; effort and luck are considered unstable because they can vary or fluctuate over time. Recent work based on Weiner's theory has confirmed that, in fact, perceptions of success and failure are important mediators in understanding individual differences in achievement situations. In addition, he also notes that students' need for achievement influences the type of perceptions they make in a success and failure situation.¹²

Another influential area is that of attitudes. Attitudes influence the way individuals perform in academic situations. We must examine the factors which direct those attitudes and influence behaviors. Green states:

In education, they (attitudes) help particularly in the motivational domain because they provide explanations of why some students avoid, while

¹²Bernard Weiner, Cognitive Views of Human Motivation, (New York: Academic Press, 1974), pp. 51-69.

others approach, educational tasks. If we learn how to develop positive attitudes in students, we can presumably increase the approach behavior and lessen the avoidance behavior.¹³

A review of the literature on both attitudes toward reading and attribution theory in relation to behavior in success and failure situations suggests that not only sex differences but ethnic differences may be factors which influence attitude behavior. Sex differences and ethnic differences seem to have a bearing on the type of attributions made in success and failure situations and in the negative and positive responses made toward reading.

An investigation of the effects of ethnicity and the types of attributions made in success and failure situations on attitudes toward reading and on achievement motivation are the focus of this study.

The Problem

Statement of the Problem

Theory indicates that attitudes do not operate in isolation but are affected by personal, environmental, and social factors. Theory also indicates that there are differences in attributions made by individuals who are high or low in achievement motivation. Since

¹³Derick Green, "Attitudes," in Motivation in Education, ed. Samuel Ball (New York: Academic Press, 1977), p. 112.

attributions made in a success and failure situation may influence attitudes toward reading, the following questions arose:

1. Do ethnic groups differ in their attributions of success and failure to stable or unstable factors in a reading situation?
2. Do attributions of success and failure to stable or unstable factors differ among various ethnic groups in a reading situation?
3. Do attitudes toward reading differ among various ethnic groups?
4. Do ethnic groups differ in achievement motivation when identified by teacher evaluation?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify whether ethnicity, attributions made in a successful reading situation, and attributions made in a failure reading situation affect attitudes toward reading and achievement motivation among third grade males.

Statement of Hypotheses

Twelve hypotheses were generated:

- H_{o1} There is no significant difference between ethnicity and attitudes toward organized reading in the classroom among third grade males.
- H_{o2} There is no significant difference between attributions of success to ability or effort and attitudes toward organized

reading in the classroom among third grade males.

Ho₃ There is no significant difference between attributions of failure to ability or effort and attitudes toward organized reading in the classroom among third grade males.

Ho₄ There is no significant interaction of the dimension of ethnicity, attributions of success to ability or effort, attributions of failure to ability or effort, and attitudes toward organized reading in the classroom among third grade males.

Ho₅ There is no significant difference between ethnicity and attitudes toward general reading among third grade males.

Ho₆ There is no significant difference between attributions of success to ability or effort and attitudes toward general reading among third grade males.

Ho₇ There is no significant difference between attributions of failure to ability or effort and attitudes toward general reading among third grade males.

Ho₈ There is no significant interaction of the dimension of ethnicity, attributions of

success to ability or effort, attributions of failure to ability or effort and attitudes toward general reading among third grade males.

Ho₉ There is no significant difference between ethnicity and achievement motivation among third grade males.

Ho₁₀ There is no significant difference between attributions of success to ability or effort and achievement motivation among third grade males.

Ho₁₁ There is no significant difference between attributions of failure to ability or effort and achievement motivation among third grade males.

Ho₁₂ There is no significant interaction of the dimension of ethnicity, attributions of success to ability or effort, attributions of failure to ability or effort and achievement motivation among third grade males.

Definition of Terms

1. Attitudes: "A system of feelings. . . which cause the learner to approach or avoid a reading situation"¹⁴ as measured by the Heathington Attitude Scale.
2. Attribution: "The inferences that an observer makes about the causes of behavior--either his own or another person's"¹⁵ as measured by students' identification of ability or effort as the reason for success and failure.
3. Ethnicity: A sense of identity derived from belonging to a group of people who share common traits or customs. Ethnic groups considered for this study are Blacks, Whites, and Chicano students.
4. Stable factor: A stable factor is one which does not vary or fluctuate over time. Ability is considered a stable factor.
5. Unstable factor: An unstable factor is one which can change or vary over a period of time. Effort is considered an unstable factor.
6. Achievement Motivation: An attitude that occurs when an individual undertakes a task, enters into competition, or strives toward excellence, as measured by third grade teacher identification of high and low achievers on a ten item Lickert scale.
7. Independent Reading Level: A level at which a student can read orally and comprehend the material without the help of an instructor or other persons as measured by the Standard Reading Inventory.
8. Frustration Reading Level: A level at which a student cannot read or comprehend the material being read when questioned by an instructor or other persons as measured by the Standard Reading Inventory.

¹⁴Alexander and Filler, Attitudes and Reading, 1.

¹⁵Daniel Bar-Tal, "Attributional Analysis of Achievement-Related Behavior," Review of Educational Research 48 (1978), 259.

9. Success Reading Situation: A successful reading situation is considered to be synonymous with the independent reading level.
10. Failure Reading Situation: A failure reading situation is considered to be synonymous with the frustration reading level.
11. Organized Reading in the Classroom: Organized reading in the classroom consists of the following reading situations: (1) the student is in a reading group, (2) the student reads out loud in class, (3) the student reads in a reading circle, and (4) the student reads stories in his reading book.
12. General Reading: General reading consists of the following reading situations: (1) the student reads stories in books, (2) the student reads in a quiet place, (3) the student reads on a trip, and (4) the student reads instead of coloring.

Assumptions

The assumptions of this study were:

1. that the male subjects in this study were representative of other third grade male populations attending Title I schools.
2. that subjects for this study were representative of other third grade male populations from the same ethnic categories.
3. that teachers could identify students high and low in achievement motivation.
4. that attitudes toward reading could be measured.
5. that success reading situations were synonymous with independent reading levels.
6. that failure reading situations were synonymous with frustration reading levels.
7. that homogeneity and normality existed for this population.

8. that the final evaluation and generalizations derived from this study were valid only when applied to the school districts included in this study or to school districts with comparable pupil population.

Limitations of the Study

1. The study was limited to third grade male Black, White, and Chicano students in six urban elementary schools in central Oklahoma.
2. The measuring instruments were limited to the Heathington Attitude Scale, the Standard Reading Inventory, the Achievement Motivation Scale, and two sets of causality cards on which were written "Effort" and "Ability."

Overview of Subsequent Chapters

Chapter II presents a review of the literature and research on attitudes toward reading and their relationship to achievement, teaching methods, sex differences, socioeconomic levels, interest, and personality.

Chapter II also presents a review of the literature on attribution theory and related research on individual's perceptions of causality and reading.

Chapter III presents the design used in this study. This chapter described the testing procedures, the credibility of the instruments, and the statistical analyses.

Chapter IV presents the statistical analyses of the twelve hypotheses as presented in Chapter I.

Chapter V presents an overview of this study, conclusions and recommendations for teachers, teacher educators, and other researchers.

Summary

Chapter I presented a discussion of the need for research on attitudes towards reading, attributions of success and failure, hypotheses, and assumptions for this study. Chapter II presents the literature on the factors related to attitudes toward reading, attribution theory, and related research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

There are great expectations placed on an individual to acquire the skills necessary to succeed in our society. The educational institutions are given the responsibility of insuring the acquisition of those skills. Of the skills to be acquired, reading receives the greatest attention. The cognitive dimension of reading acquisition receives a great emphasis while the affective dimension of its acquisition receives much less. The affective domain is, however, the propelling force which affects the acquisition of the cognitive skills. Brenda Kolker states:

If the first prerequisite for reading, attitude, is not positive, then it is likely that the others will not occur at all or will occur haphazardly. . . .¹

The second area which receives little attention is the area of individuals' perceptions of the cause of their success and failure, especially in an educational environment. The majority of research in

¹Brenda Kolker, "Processing Print," in Teaching Reading, ed. J. Estill Alexander (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979), p. 7.

education is experimental in nature. Focus is on change produced by an external source rather than on change produced by an internal source.

This chapter presents factors related to attitudes toward reading. Those factors are reading achievement, teaching methods, sex differences, interest, socioeconomic status, and personality. In addition, this chapter presents a review of attribution theory, the perceived causes of success and failure utilizing the attributional model, and research on perception of causality related to reading.

Attitudes

An understanding of attitude formation and its influence on reading behavior is fundamental for any research on attitudes. Katz and Stotland have postulated that attitudes develop because of a special need. They identify three need areas: proximal, object instrumental, and ego instrumental. Proximal needs are primarily concerned with the acquisition of attitudes based on association. For example, if a student finds reading pleasant in school and that effect is rewarded and encouraged, the student will develop a positive attitude toward reading. Object instrumental is associated with goal attainment. If a person identifies a certain subject as necessary for achievement of a personal goal; then, that person will develop a positive

attitude toward that subject. Ego instrumental is the perception the individual holds about himself or herself. For example, if a person perceives himself as an intellectual; then, this attitude will serve to strengthen his perception of his intellect.² Indirectly built into Katz and Stotland's definition of attitude formation is the concept that attitudes are directive. Attitudes influence a person's behavior in order to enhance one of the three needs. As such, attitudes can act as a motivational enzyme to increase or decrease the individual's perception of a particular need.

Allport agrees with Katz and Stotland; however, he adds a mediation dimension. Attitudes act as a mediating force between individuals' needs and their environment, and as a consequence, they determine the type of behavior exhibited. He states:

. . . attitudes determine for each individual what he will see and hear, what he will think and what he will do. . . they draw lines about, and segregate, an otherwise chaotic environment; they are our methods for finding our way about in an ambiguous universe. . . attitudes play a decisive role in the determination of meaning and of behavior.³

²D. Katz and E. Stotland, "A Preliminary Statement to a Theory of Attitude Structure and Change," in Psychology: A Study of a Science, ed. S. Koch (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1958), p. 242.

³G. W. Allport, "Attitudes in the History of Social Psychology," in Attitudes, ed. Niel Warren and Marie Jahoda (England: Penguin, 1966), p. 18.

Mathewson, in the development of his affective reading model, denotes attitude as the central component of his model. He also views attitude as a motivating force which directs behavior. In his rationale for using attitude as the focal point of his model, he states:

. . . it is apparent that a favorable attitude with a strong action orientation may be the same as interest. More concretely, a child having only a favorable attitude toward books might not necessarily be "driven" to read them. If his favorable attitude had a strong action orientation, it is likely that he would not only seek out books and read them, but also ⁴ find a place to keep them in his home. . . .

From the above, attitude can act as a "driving" force. The fact that this "driving" force can take one of two directions, negative or positive, is the basis for research on attitudes toward reading. Wilson and Hall,⁵ and Alexander⁶ emphasize the importance of positive attitudes on reading behavior. However, other writers and researchers such as Squire have indicated that reading attitudes and their relationship to other aspects of reading is impossible to measure, because:

⁴Mathewson, "Functions of Attitudes in the Reading Process," p. 657.

⁵Robert M. Wilson and Mary Ann Hall, Reading and the Elementary School Child: Theory and Practice for Teachers, (New York: Reinhold, 1972), p. 11.

⁶Alexander and Filler, Attitudes and Reading, p. 315.

. . . the attitudes of individuals tend to be unique, personal, and highly unpredictable.⁷

Regardless of this belief, some research on attitudes toward reading and their influence on other factors related to reading is vital. Research on attitudes and their effect on reading behavior can provide a better understanding of the reading process. The following section examines the research on attitudes toward reading and reading achievement.

Attitude and Achievement

There are a minimal number of studies in the area of attitude and reading achievement. Those that do exist indicate that positive attitudes toward reading are in direct proportion to the level of reading achievement attained by students.

Askov and Fischbach examined the relationship between attitudes and reading achievement, sex, and grade placement with children in grades one through three. They found that the higher the achievement level the higher the attitude toward recreational reading. They contend that favorable attitudes toward reading develop when comprehension rather than word recognition is the focal point of reading instruction. These researchers suggest that by focusing attention on

⁷James R. Squire, "About Attitudes Toward Reading?" English Journal 58 (April 1969): 523.

achievement rather than on attitude development, attitudes toward reading becomes positive. They state:

Since it was demonstrated in this study that attitudes toward reading are more positive with improved achievement, programs that focus on improving attitudes are perhaps misplacing their efforts. Since attitudes may become positive with improved reading ability perhaps our effort should more properly be directed to the improvement of reading skills and achievement.⁸

Dotson also found a significant relationship between attitudes and reading achievement. Her sample consisted of three hundred and thirty-seven fifth grade students in Tennessee. She suggested that educators provide a program which would insure reading success and ultimately increase attitudes toward reading.⁹

After testing three hundred and fourteen fifth grade students in Tennessee, Hall reported similar findings. Using results from the Metropolitan Reading Test, she divided subjects into high achievers, students reading 6.0 and above; middle achievers, those reading at 5.0; and low achievers, those reading at 4.9 and below. She then administered the Heathington Attitude Scale to identify students' attitudes toward reading in each of the three groups. Hall found that high achievers

⁸Eunice Askov and Thomas J. Fischbach, "An Investigation of Primary Pupil's Attitudes Toward Reading", Journal of Experimental Education 41 (Spring 1973): 4.

⁹Margaret S. Dotson, "The Relationship Between Fifth Grade Children's Attitude Toward Reading and Factors Such as Success and Failure in Reading, Intelligence, Sex, Grade, Retention, and Socioeconomic Status", (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Tennessee, 1977).

had a more positive attitude toward reading than did the middle and low achievers and that middle achievers had a more positive attitude than did the low achievers.¹⁰

Gardner's study of self-esteem and reading among fourth grade Pima Indians in Arizona revealed that there was a significant relationship between reading achievement and attitudes toward reading for his population.¹¹ Roswell also found that negative attitudes toward reading related more closely to reading achievement than to other factors such as age and socioeconomic status.¹²

Puryear in his analysis of ninety fourth grade students also found a significant relationship between attitudes toward reading and reading achievement. He administered two attitude scales. One was the Roswell Attitude Scale which was teacher-rated and the Estes Attitude Scale which was student-rated. A significant relationship existed between reading achievement and the two attitude scales.¹³

¹⁰Diane Sprawls Hall, "Teaching the Relationship of Reading Attitudes to Achievement, Sex, and Social Class Among Fifth Grade Pupils," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Tennessee, 1977).

¹¹R.C.A. Gardner, "The Relationship of Self-Esteem and Variables Associated With Reading for Fourth Grade Pima Indian Children," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Arizona, 1972).

¹²C.G. Roswell, "Change in Attitude Toward Reading and its Relationship to Certain Variables Among Children With Reading Difficulties," (Ph.D. dissertation, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1967).

¹³Charles Puryear, "An Investigation of the Relationship Between Attitudes Toward Reading and Read-

On the other hand, Greenburg, Gerger, Chall, and Davidson did not find a significant relationship between reading achievement levels and attitudes in their study of poor and good readers in an economically deprived area. The researchers examined one hundred and fifteen Black children who lived in a deprived area. Testing instruments used to measure reading achievement and attitudes toward reading were the Metropolitan Primary Reading Test and a semantic differential attitude scale developed by them. They found no significant relationship between the two. They did note that achievement scores on the reading test were always higher for girls than they were for boys. The authors speculate that since children from low socioeconomic levels received low scores on standardized achievement tests, their attitudes might be negative.¹⁴

With the exception of this last study, this section reveals that there is a positive and proportional relationship between the level of reading achievement and attitudes toward reading. A number of researchers suggested that teachers emphasize students' reading ability in order to develop a more positive attitude toward reading. Various researchers have investigated the influence of

ing Achievement, (Ph.D. dissertation, University of South Carolina, 1975).

¹⁴J.W. Greenburg, J.H. Gerver, J. Chall, and H. Davidson, "Attitudes of Children From a Deprived Environment Toward Achievement Related Concepts," Journal of Educational Research 21 (October 1965), 57-61.

teaching approaches and their effect upon achievement and ultimately attitudes. The following section presents a review of the research on attitudes and teaching approaches.

Attitudes and Teaching Approaches

Studies which have introduced a specific teaching approach or method in order to investigate its relationship to achievement and attitudes have frequently not found an improvement in attitudes toward reading. Buerger investigated the effect of remedial instruction on long-term progress and attitudes among one hundred forty-four students who were from grades three through seven and who were reading below grade level. He divided students into two groups: those that had a favorable attitude toward reading and those that did not. The experimental group received intensive remedial instruction at the Lakewood School Reading Clinic while the other group received only the regular instruction. He found that the remedial instruction had no effect upon vocabulary, reading comprehension, or attitudes toward reading.¹⁵ Lamb, using the Language Experience Approach on two hundred and thirty-six students, 87% of whom were Black, also found no significant difference between attitudes

¹⁵A. Buerger, "A Follow-Up of Remedial Reading Instruction," Reading Teacher 21 (January 1968), 332.

toward reading and achievement as a result of the intensive use of this approach.¹⁶

Askov investigated the effects of individualized reading instruction on students in grades two and three. After one year, he found no significant differences in achievement. He found that positive attitudes existed for only the experimental group in one of two schools. According to Askov:

. . . It cannot be concluded, therefore, that the experimental treatment was specifically beneficial in terms of positive attitudes toward recreational reading for either a particular grade or particular reading group.¹⁷

Gurney also found no significant differences in attitude between the two groups in his sample. He selected two groups of children from the fourth grade. Chronological age, reading levels as measured by the Gates Reading Survey, and intelligence as measured by Lorge-Thorndike, Level 2, Non Verbal Battery were the criteria for matching the groups. Students in the experimental group received fourteen weeks of individualized instruction using the SRA Reading Laboratory II. A. Although there were no significant difference in attitudes between the groups, he found that pupils in the experimental group tended to show more positive attitudes toward reading as measured by the Reading

¹⁶ Pose Lamb, "The Language Experience Approach to Teaching Beginning Reading to Culturally Disadvantaged Students," ERIC ED 059 314, January 1971.

¹⁷ Eunice N. Askov, "Assessment of a System of Individualizing Reading Instruction: Report from the Individually Guided Instruction in Elementary Reading Project," ERIC ED 040 840, March 1970.

Attitude Scale than did those in the control group.

The differences between the two groups may have been the result of the "Hawthorne effect" since the researcher indicated that students in the experimental group knew that they were a special group.¹⁸

Levenson, using ability grouping with sixth graders, compared thirty students from high reading groups and thirty students from low reading groups. He found significant differences in attitudes between the two groups. The low ability group had a negative attitude toward reading. He suggested that ability grouping may reinforce negative attitudes toward reading and suggested that more individualized personalized approaches would affect attitudes toward reading.¹⁹

Healy found attitudes toward reading to be positive when she used an eclectic reading approach in the classroom. She used a combination of small group instruction, flexible interest grouping, reading partners, and individualized instruction with two groups of fifth grade students. In a follow-up study of the same students when they were in junior high school, she found that the positive attitudes toward reading that

¹⁸David Gurney, "The Effect of an Individualized Reading Program on Reading," Reading Teacher 19 (January 1966), 277-280.

¹⁹Stanley Levenson, "The Attitudes and Feelings of Selected Sixth Grade Children Toward Reading in Ability Groups," (Ph.D. dissertation, United States International University, 1972).

the students had acquired at the elementary level had remained with a majority of those students over that period of time.²⁰

Johnson analyzed the differences in childrens' attitudes toward reading in four different schools which used various teaching approaches. He found that students from the lower grades had a more positive attitude toward reading than did those in successively higher grades. His population consisted of students from the second, fourth, and sixth grades.²¹

Bernstein evaluated the "Right to Read" program in Mamaroneck Public Schools. Students in grades two through eight participated in the study. One group participated in the "Right to Read" program for a full year. The second group participated in the program for only one-half year. The third group did not participate in the program at all. She found that improved reading ability was approximately the same for all three groups. In addition, the "Right to Read" program produced little measurable change in the pupil's attitudes toward reading.²²

²⁰Ann K. Healy, "Effects of Changing Children's Attitudes Toward Reading," Elementary English 42 (November 1965), 269-272.

²¹Lorenzo Johnson, "A Description of Organization, Methods of Instruction, Achievement, and Attitudes Toward Reading in Selected Elementary Schools," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oregon, 1965).

²²Margery R. Bernstein, "Right to Read Evaluation: Mamaroneck Public School, 1971-1972," ERIC ED 069 735, June 1972.

Fowler also studied the effects of a "Like to Read" program and its effect upon reading achievement and attitudes. She did not find that reading achievement levels increased when students' attitudes toward reading improved.²³

The research on various teaching approaches such as individualized instruction and the Language Experience Approach and the different reading programs and their effect upon reading attitudes seems to indicate that the use of eclectic teaching approaches have more of an effect upon attitudes toward reading than do programs which utilize only one approach. Bond and Dykstra arrived at a similar conclusion.²⁴

Attitude and Sex Differences

Research studies such as Dotson,²⁵ Hall,²⁶ and Lamb²⁷ substantiate that girls have a more positive attitude toward reading than do boys. Speculation about

²³Flora Fowler, "The Development of the 'Like to Read' Program and an Appraisal of its Effect upon Students' Attitudes Toward Reading and Upon Their Reading Achievement," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Tennessee, 1972).

²⁴Guy Bond and Robert Dykstra, Coordinating Center for First Grade Reading Instruction Programs, Final Report, U.S. Dept. of Health, Education, and Welfare (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1967).

²⁵Dotson, "Fifth Grade Children's Attitudes."

²⁶Hall, "Relationship of Reading Attitudes."

²⁷Lamb, "Language Experience Approach."

the reasons for this difference and its effect upon attitudes toward reading range from direct influences such as grouping to indirect influences such as school and home environments.

Hansen studied reading attitudes among fourth grade students. He found that girls showed a significantly better attitude toward reading than did boys when measured by an instrument designed by the researcher. He suggested that these sex differences in attitudes toward reading may be the result of the types of activities that boys and girls engage in before they enter school.²⁸

Austin, Clark, and Fitchett in their book, Reading Rights for Boys suggest that one of the reasons for the lack of achievement and negative attitudes may be in the fact that boys must exist in an educational environment which caters more to the female than it does to the male. These differences and demands placed upon boys to conform exist at both social and academic levels. They state:

There is little doubt that the character of American education is feminine, either by design or as a comfortable acceptance unintentionally adopted by the teachers and administrators developing the structure of the program. Standards of conduct, restricted environments for learning, the majority members of the instructional staff, academic and social expectations, and the physical

²⁸Harlan S. Hansen, "The Impact of the Home Literary Environment on Reading Attitudes," Elementary English 46 (January 1969), 17-24.

setting for the school are all substantially feminine, with little regard for the male culture presented within the societal structure outside of the school.²⁹

Wyatt grouped first grade students by sex and exposed them to a variety of teaching approaches. She hypothesized that boys using the linguistic approach would read better than boys using a typical basal approach. She also hypothesized that boys in the sex group reading situation would read better than boys grouped by the traditional method. She found little difference between the boys' reading achievement in either of the reading approaches. She found, however, that homogeneous grouping by sex was more affective for boys than was heterogeneous grouping. When she compared the differences between boys and girls, she found that girls had a significantly higher mean score on the paragraph meaning subtest of the Stanford Achievement Test than did the boys. The researcher concluded that:

. . . the sex-grouping approach was somewhat more affective for the boys than the control approach. The advantage was small but consistent. For girls, however, the sex-grouping approach seemed detrimental. Girls in the sex-grouping approach sometimes had lower scores on the achievement test than girls in the control approach.³⁰

²⁹David Austin, Velma Clark, and Gladys Fitchett, Reading Rights for Boys (New York: Meredity Corp., (1971), p. 1.

³⁰Nita Wyatt, "The Reading Achievement of First Grade Boys verses First Grade Girls," Reading Teacher 19 (January 1966), 664.

Although Wyatt found that sex grouping was beneficial for boys, she did not administer any type of questionnaire on attitudes toward reading.

Rust studied pre-school childrens' behavior and found that:

Children chose to play with items that had attributes favored by their own sex twice as frequently as they chose items that had attributes favored by the other sex.³¹

The implications of Rust's findings have a direct connection to reading attitudes. If boys see reading as a boy-related activity, they would favor indulging in that activity. If, however, boys regard reading as a girl-related activity, they would be less likely to want to engage in that activity.

Research on sex differences and attitudes toward reading indicate that girls have a more positive attitude toward reading than do boys. However, the reason for this difference is still speculative. Wyatt's research on sex grouping indicates that homogeneous grouping benefits boys' reading achievement level but inversely affects girls'. Austin et al, and Hansen suggest that home and school environment may account for sex differences and attitudes toward reading. Because of the limited amount of research on attitudes toward reading and sex differences, Alexander and Filler suggest that:

³¹L.W. Rust, "Attributes that Differentiate Boys' and Girls' Preferences for Materials in the Preschool Classroom: A Systems Design Approach," (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1966).

Teachers should be cautioned not to assume that girls will necessarily have more positive attitudes toward reading than will boys.³²

Attitude and Socioeconomic Levels

Several studies have specifically analyzed the influence of socioeconomic levels on attitudes toward reading. Hall, for example, specifically investigated the relationship between childrens' reading attitudes and social class. Using factor analysis, she found that both male and female students from the higher socioeconomic levels had a more positive attitude toward reading than middle class males and females and lower class females. Lower class males had the least positive attitudes. She concluded:

Reading attitudes became more positive as socioeconomic status and achievement moved from lower to higher levels.³³

Bullen, using low socioeconomic and culturally deprived students from grades one through five, investigated the issue of whether more positive attitudes could be developed by children who had limited experiences and exposure to books. Using fifteen classrooms with three control and three experimental groups, Bullen employed volunteers to visit the experimental groups to arouse or strengthen interests in books. In the experimental group, volunteers read to the students, and

³²Alexander and Filler, Attitudes and Reading, p. 13.

³³Hall, "Relationship of Reading Attitudes," p. 47.

the students acted out the stories. Both the experimental and control groups received additional books at various reading levels and interest. The control group did not receive the aid of volunteers or participate in the same activities. She found significant differences between the control and experimental group on attitudes toward reading in the home, in the school, in the library, and in owning books. These differences were evident among students in grades one through five.³⁴

Other studies have found no significant relationship between attitudes and socioeconomic status. Filler, for example, in an experimental study with one hundred and seventy-seven fifth grade students, half of whom were in Title I schools and the other half in schools which did not receive federal funds, found no such relationship.³⁵

Heimberger identified one thousand ninety-three students from the low, middle, and upper socioeconomic levels in grades one through four and administered the Sartain Reading Attitude Inventory. He, too, found no significant differences in attitudes among the students from the three socioeconomic levels. The researcher did not find verification of the general belief that

³⁴Gertrude Bullen, "A Study of Motivating Children to Read," ERIC ED 040 018, March 1970.

³⁵Ronald C. Filler, "Effects of Socioeconomic Status on Attitudes Toward Reading," (MA. thesis, University of Tennessee, 1973).

students from lower socioeconomic levels have poorer attitudes toward reading than do students from higher socioeconomic levels. He did find that students ranging in age from 8.6 to 9.11 tended to score higher on attitudes toward reading than did those students ranging in age from 10.6 to 11.6.³⁶ Groff's study of three hundred and five fifth grade boys and girls,³⁷ Hansen's study of fourth grade students,³⁸ and Ransbury's study of sixty fifth and sixth grade students³⁹ confirmed the negligible relationship between socioeconomic status and attitudes toward reading.

In summary, research on attitudes toward reading and socioeconomic levels is scant and inconclusive. Although Hall found that students from low socioeconomic levels had less positive attitudes toward reading than did those from the middle and upper levels, Heimberger found no such relationship. To confound the issue even further, Bullen found that among low socioeconomic students exposure to a rich reading environment

³⁶M.H. Heimberger, "Sartain Reading Attitude Inventory," ERIC ED 045 291, April 1970.

³⁷Patrick J. Groff, "Children's Attitudes Toward Reading and Their Critical-Type Materials," Journal of Educational Research 55 (April 1963): 313-314.

³⁸Hansen, "Home Literacy Environment," pp. 17-24.

³⁹Molly Kayes Ransbury, "Perceptions of Attitude Toward the Act of Reading as Defined by Children, Their Parents, and Teachers," (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1971).

influenced attitudes toward reading. Based on these research findings, it is impossible to conclude that socioeconomic status as a single factor influences attitudes toward reading.

Attitude and Interest

The basis for the rationale for examining interest and its effect on attitude rests on the research from the previous section on attitude and achievement. Achievement influences attitude; comprehension is a viable part of achievement. Consequently, studies which deal with the influence of interest on achievement may be indirectly addressing themselves to attitudes toward reading. According to Mathewson:

. . . what is commonly called interest in the educational literature and elsewhere is a favorable attitude with a strong action orientation.⁴⁰

Estes and Vaughn examined forty-six fourth grade students all reading at grade level. The researchers developed passages in six different interest areas but all at the same difficulty level, 5.5, in order to determine what influence interest had on comprehension. Students selected the passage that interested them the most. After finishing the selection, the students received a comprehension test. The researchers

⁴⁰Mathewson, "Function of Attitudes," p. 658.

found that the students read the more difficult passage with greater comprehension. They state:

This study affirms, then, that interest appears to be a very potent factor in determining reading comprehension.⁴¹

Unfortunately, Estes and Vaughn did not evaluate the influence of the students' ability on their attitudes toward reading. Groff studied attitudes toward reading and content reading. He found that there was a positive relationship between fourth and sixth grade childrens' expressed attitudes toward four different content type reading materials and their scores on an experimental test of critical reading. He found that:

The relationship between general reading ability and attitudes toward reading as a school activity approached a substantial level.⁴²

It would appear from these two studies that interest and ability to comprehend can affect attitudes.

Shnayer investigated the relationship between interest and reading comprehension among sixth grade students. His population consisted of five hundred and seventy-eight students from the upper lower and lower middle socioeconomic levels. He divided the students into seven groups according to their reading ability

⁴¹Thomas H. Estes and Joseph L. Vaughn, Jr., "Reading Interest and Comprehension Implications," Reading Teacher 27 (February 1974): 151.

⁴²Groff, "Children's Attitudes Toward Reading," p. 314.

as measured by the Gates Reading Survey. He required students to read stories two grade levels higher than their mean reading ability. He found that there was a difference between the comprehension of high interest and low interest stories. This difference existed for all seven groups.⁴³ Smith and Johnson confirmed Shnayer's findings.⁴⁴

Schotanus divided forty second grade students into two groups, those who had negative attitudes toward reading and those that had positive attitudes toward reading. Students self-selected materials for recreational reading. She found that both groups chose materials below their instructional level and that students with positive attitudes were not better readers than those with unfavorable attitudes.⁴⁵

Although the research on interest and its possible effect upon attitudes toward reading is minimal, one can postulate that interest and its effect upon comprehension may also influence attitudes toward reading. Unfortunately, only Groff and Shnayer included

⁴³Sidney W. Shnayer, "Relationships Between Reading Interest and Reading Comprehension," Reading and Realism, ed. J. Allen Figurel (Newark: International Reading Association, 1960), pp. 698-701.

⁴⁴J.R. Smith and F.A. Johnson, "The Popularity of Children's Fiction as a Function of Reading Ease and Related Factors," Journal of Educational Research 65 (May-June 1972): 398-400.

⁴⁵Helen D. Schotanus, "The Relationship between Difficulty of Reading Materials and Attitudes Toward Reading," ERIC ED 016 596.

the element of attitude in their studies. The influence of personality as a possible factor affecting attitudes toward reading appears in the literature. The following section addresses this issue.

Attitude and Personality

As early as 1928, authors such as Blanchard investigated the relationship between personality behavior and attitudes in order to ascertain causality of reading failure.⁴⁶ Researchers have used a pictorial association method as a means of assessing attitudes towards reading and the reading situation. The behaviors exhibited by retarded readers, revealed by personality research, are in some ways similar to behaviors exhibited by individuals who are low in achievement motivation. For this reason, the next section presents studies dealing with personality and attitude.

Spache used the Rosenzweig Picture Frustration Test to identify attitudes held by retarded readers toward adults and peers. Spache believes that remedial reading instruction improves the reading ability of retarded readers only if the behaviors exhibited by these readers are understood. The Rosenzweig Picture Frustration Test assesses the "extent of

⁴⁶Phyllis Blanchard, "Reading Disabilities in Relation to Maladjustment," Mental Hygiene (1928): 442-478.

frustration present in the unsuccessful reader."⁴⁷

From his analysis, Spache found that, "retarded readers appear to be more aggressive, significantly less insightful, and less apt to accept blame"⁴⁸ when dealing with their peers. When dealing with adults, retarded readers are, "less obviously aggressive, more inclined to accept blame . . . they express their frustration against the obstacles which has caused the situation to occur."⁴⁹ If remedial readers view inability as the reason for their lack of achievement, they may acquire negative attitudes toward the subject of reading. Mutiner, Loughlin, and Powell used the Two House Technique Test to investigate the relationship of attitudes toward family relationships among under-achieving readers and average achieving readers. Underachievers were those students who were reading below their anticipated grade placement based on their IQ scores. His sample consisted of twenty-two boys and twenty-two girls. The researchers found that:

The underachieving readers did not place their parents in a significant position as did the achieving readers, and they did not separate

⁴⁷G. Spache, "Personality Characteristics of Retarded Readers as measured by the Picture-Frustration Study," Educational and Psychological Measurement 14 (June 1954), 189.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 190

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 190

themselves from siblings as much as the achieving readers did.⁵⁰

Zimmerman and Allebrand investigated the personality characteristics and attitudes toward achievement of two groups of school children differing in reading ability. They hypothesized that:

Poor readers, subjects reading at least two years below grade level, would show less adequate personal adjustment and less productive attitudes toward achievement.⁵¹

They selected their subjects from the fourth and fifth graders who were in the middle and lower socioeconomic levels. Half of the subjects were of Mexican descent. Using the Thematic Apperception Test, the California Test of Mental Maturity, and the Wide Range Achievement Test, they found that:

The major differences between the two groups appeared to be more in the area of personal rather than social adjustment, specifically, personal worth, feelings of belongingness, withdrawal tendencies, sense of personal freedom, nervous systems, self reliance, and community relations . . . poor readers confessed to feelings of hopelessness.⁵²

They stated further that, "Good readers revealed specific themes of effort. . . poor readers did not stress effort."⁵³

⁵⁰D. Mutiner, L. Loughlin, and M. Powell, "Some Differences in the Family Relationships of Achieving and Underachieving Readers," Journal of Genetic Psychology 109 (1966), 73.

⁵¹Irla L. Zimmerman and George N. Allebrand, "Personality Characteristics and Attitudes Toward Achievement of Good and Poor Readers," Journal of Educational Research 59 (September 1959): 28.

⁵²Ibid., p. 29

⁵³Ibid., p. 30

O'Connor developed the Reading Apperception Test which is also a pictorial method of assessing students' attitudes toward reading. The researcher reported that attitudes toward reading relate to (1) reading ability, (2) specific reading situations, (3) elements of attitude; thinking, feeling, and wishing, and avoidance and approach behavior. Subjects consisted of seventy-two males in grades one through six. He divided the subjects into average and severely retarded readers. His findings indicated that severely retarded readers displayed slightly higher avoidance attitudes toward reading than did average readers. They also perceived the remedial reading situation as the most unpleasant situation.⁵⁴

Studies presented thus far on personality and attitude have elicited the perceptions of remedial readers of subjects concerning behavior and attitude. The researchers used pictures to obtain these perceptions. Only one study examining attitudes toward reading asked students directly what caused them to have the attitudes they had about reading. Ransbury interviewed parents, teachers, and students in order to identify which factors affected childrens' attitudes toward reading.

⁵⁴William J. O'Connor, "The Reading Apperception Test: An Exploration of Attitudes Toward Reading," (Ph.D. dissertation, Oklahoma State University, 1968).

Among fifth and sixth grade children, she found that they attributed their attitudes toward reading to their ability to read.⁵⁵

Although not related to reading, the study conducted by Jones and Grieneek examined the relationship between students' perceived causes of success and success in college. These researchers asked college students to identify the causal factor which influenced their scholastic achievement. They found that students' concept of their ability as measured by the Brooker Scale on Self-Concept of Ability proved to be the most effective and consistent predictor of success over such other factors such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and grade point average (GPA).

A review of the research on attitude and personality indicates that the behavior exhibited by retarded readers includes a sense of frustration toward obstacles, adults, and peers they perceive to interfere with their goals. Zimmerman and Allebrand indicate that these behaviors appear to be in the area of personal rather than social adjustment. O'Connor, Zimmerman, and Allebrand identify themes of effort and ability as factors which affect attitudes toward reading. This theme of effort and ability lies at the heart of attribution theory. The following section presents a

⁵⁵John Jones and Laurabeth Grieneek, "Measures of Self-Perception as Predictors of Scholastic Achievement," Journal of Educational Research 63, (1970), 203.

review of attribution theory, related research, and attribution retraining with retarded readers.

Research on attribution theory evolved from high school and college students. The possibility exists that the type of attributions made by these students also prevails among younger students. This section reviews research related to the development of attribution theory, research related to achievement motivation and causal attributions made by students to explain their success and failure, and research related to reading utilizing the attributional model.

Attribution Theory

Attribution theory deals with the perceived causal factors which influence success and failure. Bernard Weiner, one of the primary advocates of this theory, and others postulated that an individual's belief about four causal factors: ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck, influence his or her achievement-related behavior. This cognitive theory of motivation views individuals as rational thinking human beings who utilize their previous experiences to predict their possible success and failure in future achievement-related situations. According to Weiner et al, "Attribution theorists postulate that future behavior is in part determined by the perceived causes of past events."⁵⁶

⁵⁶Bernard Weiner, Richard Nierenberg, and Mark Goldstein, "Social Learning (Locus of Control) Versus Attributional (Causal Stability) Interpretations of Expectancy of Success," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 44 (1976), 56.

In other words, attribution theorists believe individuals to be hypothesis testers who use knowledge of themselves as well as of their environment to determine their behavior.

Heider originally proposed the four causal factors under two determinants, power and motivation. In the power determinant are personal characteristics such as ability and intelligence which he calls the "can" variable. This term indicates whether the goal can be obtained if a person has the ability and intelligence to achieve it. The second determinant motivation includes the "try" variable which determines the action the individual must exert to achieve the goal. Both "can" and "try" are necessary for goal attainment.⁵⁷

Frieze conducted one of the first experimental studies which confirmed Heider's belief. She used a free response situation as a means of identifying individuals' predictions of causality. She asked college students to assume that an individual succeeded or failed at an academic task and a non-academic task and then determine the cause of their success and/or failure. She gave them no further background information. The subjects reported the following causal factors

⁵⁷Fritz Heider, The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations (New York: Wiley, 1958), p. 16.

as reasons for success and failure: ability, immediate effort, task difficulty, luck, something about other people, mood, and fatigue.⁵⁸ Heider, Weiner, and Rotter had proposed these causal elements for success and failure on intuition; Frieze's research confirmed the order of their importance.

Weiner, unlike Rotter, developed a two dimensional scheme of success and failure. He indicated that ability and effort were internal properties, while task difficulty and luck were external properties. He further differentiated these four causal elements into stable and unstable factors. Ability and task difficulty were stable because they did not vary or fluctuate over time. Effort and luck were considered unstable because they can fluctuate or vary over time. Weiner proposed that the internal/external factors (locus of control) determined the affective reactions of pride and shame, while stable/unstable factors determine what an individual's expectation of success will be. Weiner stated, "The stability of causal attributes, rather than the locus of control, is related to expectancy of success."⁵⁹ Table 1 provides a 2 X 2 classification scheme of Weiner's model.

⁵⁸I. Frieze, "Studies of Information Processing and the Attributional Process," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1973).

⁵⁹Bernard Weiner, "An Attributional-Interpretation of Expectancy-Value Theory," in Cognitive Views of Human Motivation, ed. Bernard Weiner (New York: Academic Press, 1974), p. 61.

TABLE 1
CLASSIFICATION SCHEME FOR THE PERCEIVED
DETERMINANTS OF ACHIEVEMENT BEHAVIOR⁶⁰

Stability	Locus of Control	
	Internal	External
Stable	Ability	Task Difficulty
Unstable	Effort	Luck

Weiner further divided the internal dimension into four conditions which he feels relate to achievement need and behavior. They are: (1) attribution of success to ability, (2) attribution of success to effort, (3) attribution of failure to lack of ability, and (4) attribution of failure to lack of effort. Of these four conditions, one and three are stable while two and four are unstable. Table 2 provides a visual picture of Weiner's scheme.

TABLE 2
CAUSAL ATTRIBUTES OF SUCCESS AND FAILURE

	Success	Failure
Stable	Ability	Lack of Ability
Unstable	Effort	Lack of Effort

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 52.

The link between achievement motivation originally proposed by McClelland and Atkinson,⁶¹ and attribution theory is the type of attribution made by an individual who is high or low in achievement motivation. The attributional model demonstrates that persons high in achievement motivation attribute success to the internal factor of ability. Attributions of this type result in pride of achievement and in attraction for the activity in the future. Students high in achievement motivation who attribute failure to unstable internal factors of effort will not lower their expectations of success nor will they be less attracted to the activity in the future. These students merely believe that they have to try harder. Persons low in achievement motivation who attribute failure to the stable factor of lack of ability will lower their expectations of success and will presumably avoid achievement activities. In a success situation, attributions to ability positively relates to future expectations of success and attributions of failure negatively relates to future expectations of success.

The following section presents research investigating the influence of the stability dimension upon attributions, research examining the differences between the locus of control dimension verses the stability

⁶¹D.D. McClelland and J.W. Atkinson and others, The Achievement Motive (New York: Appleton, 1955).

dimension, and the role of achievement motivation and its involvement on attribution.

Achievement Motivation and Causal Attributions

The research on achievement motivation and causal attributions provides studies which have attempted to verify the attributional hypothesis. These studies reflect sex differences found among the subjects.

Weiner and Potepan proposed that achievement motivation relates positively to attributions of success to ability and to effort while attributions of failure relates to lack of effort. There is an inverse relationship between achievement motivation and attributions of failure to lack of ability. They state that:

Successful male students are lower in test anxiety, higher in achievement orientation, more likely to attribute success to their own ability and effort and less likely to attribute failure to lack of ability than failing male students.⁶²

Analysis of their data confirmed the above. Although Weiner and Potepan analyzed successful male and female students, the data on the female population was not significant.

McMahan verified the attributional hypothesis and examined the expectancy disconfirmation theory

⁶²Bernard Weiner and P. A. Potepan, "Personality Correlates and Affective Reactions Toward Exams of Succeeding and Failing College Students," Journal of Educational Psychology 61, (1970), 148.

utilizing the dimension of stability suggested by Weiner and the locus of control dimension suggested by Feather and Rotter. Subjects for this study were sixth graders, tenth graders, and college students. This population consisted of approximately half females and half males. Subjects solved five-letter anagrams. The researchers controlled the level of difficulty by manipulating the anagrams in order to create a success and failure condition. Using a set of six paired comparison questions for all four possible attributional factors, students rated their confidence before and after each task. According to McMahan:

The results of the present study did not contradict earlier findings that were seen as evidence of the role of locus of control in achievement behavior. They did, however, disconfirm predictions derived from locus of control interpretations and suggest that when the dimension of stability is disentangled from the locus of control, as it is in the four factor attributional analysis, the stability dimension is more salient in achievement contexts.⁶³

Rest, Nierenberg, Weiner, and Hackhansen examined the influence of effort on teacher reward and punishment. Using college students enrolled in psychology classes and Swiss school teachers, the authors asked subjects to imagine themselves as teachers who had given an exam in class. The researchers provided the teachers with information about the outcome of the exam, the students'

⁶³Ian D. McMahan, "Relationship Between Causal Attributions and Expectancy of Success," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 28, (1973), 113.

level of ability, and the effort exerted by the students. The proposed teachers were more supportive of those students who supposedly exerted effort than they were with those that did not exert effort. The researchers contend that their study, ". . . definitely confirmed the findings by Weiner and Kukla⁶⁴ that outcome and perceived immediate effort expenditures are important determinants of achievement evaluations." The researchers also found that when they manipulated task difficulty, teacher evaluation patterns did not change.⁶⁵

Schultz and Pomerantz attempted to replicate the studies by Wolk and DuCette⁶⁶ and Weiner and Potepan.⁶⁷ They examined the two views of locus of control as a mediator of the effects of achievement motivation on achievement behavior. Using ninth graders, they administered Mehrabian's Resultant Achievement Motivation Scale, Herman's Prestatic Motivation Test,

⁶⁴Bernard Weiner and Andy Kukla, "An Attributional Analysis of Achievement Motivation," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 15 (1970), 1-22.

⁶⁵Stanley Rest, et.al., "Further Evidence Concerning the Effects of Perception of Effort and Ability on Achievement Evaluations," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 28, (1973), 191.

⁶⁶Stephen Wolk and Joseph DuCette, "The Moderating Effect of Locus of Control in Relation to Achievement-Motivation Variables," Journal of Personality, 41 (1973), 59-70.

⁶⁷Weiner and Potepan, "Personality Correlates and Affective Reactions,"

the Intellectual Achievement Responsibility Questionnaire by Crandall et.al, and the Comprehension Test of Basic Skills to estimate success and failure and attractiveness of tasks. They found that:

Achievement motivation was significantly and quite substantially related to estimates of the probability of success and to preference of achievement tasks for the complete group. . . More important, the correlations between achievement motivation and achievement behavior did not differ significantly in any of the contrast groups between the internal and external groups. . . there is little support for restricting the applicability of⁶⁸ achievement motivation notions to internals.

Weiner, Heckhausen, Meyer, and Cook investigated the role of attribution to stable and unstable dimensions. They presented ten solvable and ten unsolvable puzzles to sixty-three fifth and sixth grade males. Students received or returned poker chips based upon their successes or failures on these puzzles. Weiner et.al. found:

The greater the tendency to attribute success rather than failure to effort, the greater the self reward for success relative to self punishment for failure. . . Attributions of success and failure mediate between achievement outcome and relative rewards and punishment for achievement behavior.⁶⁹

⁶⁸Charles B. Schultz and Michael Pomerantz, "Achievement Motivation, Locus of Control, and Academic Achievement Behavior," Journal of Educational Psychology 67, (1975), 42-52.

⁶⁹B. Weiner, et.al., "Causal Ascriptions and Achievement Behavior: A Conceptual Analysis of Effort and Re-analysis of Locus of Control," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 21, (1972), 242.

Using thirty-seven males in high school and a digit symbol test, the same authors had subjects allocate the perceived cause of their failure after each test and then predict their probability of success on the next test. They found that if students attributed lack of effort as their reason for failure on one task, their expectations were higher for the next task. However, if students attributed failure to lack of ability, they expressed lower expectations for the next task.

The authors conclude:

Because effort is an internal causal ascription with both variable and fixed properties, it is an especially important attribution in achievement related contexts. The identifying character of achievement oriented behaviors, which apparently are mediated by effort ascription, include the approach to achievement activities, persistence and increased performance in the face of failure, and heightened motivation at tasks of intermediate difficulty.⁷⁰

Kukla investigated the relationship between the four causal factors, effort, ability, luck and task difficulty and achievement motivation. Using one hundred and thirty-eight male college students and a digit guessing task, he found that, "High achievers considered effort to be a more salient determinant of outcome than did intermediate or low achievers."⁷¹

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 247.

⁷¹Andy Kukla, "Attributional Determinants of Achievement Related Behavior," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 21, (1972), 168.

In a similar experiment, Weiner and Kukla hypothesized that individuals high in achievement motivation were more likely to attribute success in achievement situations to themselves than were those low in achievement motivation. Testing third, fifth, sixth, high school, and college students, they found that this was the case. These attributions reached significance at the fifth and sixth grade levels, but there were no significance found for the third and fourth grade students. Weiner and Kukla proposed that the lack of ascriptions among the high and low groups in the third and fourth grade may have resulted from two causes: (1) established attributions of success and failure have not yet formed for these age groups, or (2) the instruments used to measure achievement were not suitable for this particular population. The authors described possible causes in the following manner:

The lack of consistency in the female data also might be due to measurement or developmental factors. Perhaps the effects of socialization of achievement, which result in the discouragement of striving for at least a subpopulation of females begins to be evident between the fifth and sixth grade levels.⁷²

Bar-Tal and Frieze explored the attributional patterns of sixty males and sixty females. They divided groups into high and low achievers by means of Mehrabian's Condensed Achievement Scale, and administered a set of

⁷²Bernard Weiner and Andy Kukla, "Attributional Analysis," p. 12.

twenty-five anagrams. Half of the subjects received anagrams which were more difficult than those that the other half received. Their findings lend support to the majority of attributional propositions which indicate that subjects high in achievement motivation will attribute failure to lack of effort. One of the major differences between male and female high achievers was that females tended to attribute success to external factors. Although male and female low achievers were very similar in their attributions, the women used task difficulty to explain failure while the males saw ability as the reason for their failure.⁷³

Simon and Feather also looked at attributions of success and failure in relationship to university examinations. The four attributions used were: ability, luck, knowledge, and task difficulty. Simon and Feather identified knowledge as an attribute because they felt that:

In the examination situation, a student who possesses a large store of information pertaining to the course being examined will feel more confident of success than a student with a smaller informational repertoire...Knowledge is a dispositional concept in that it has reference to a relatively stable relationship between the person and the environment.⁷⁴

⁷³Daniel Bar-Tal and Irene Frieze, "Achievement Motivation for Males and Females as a Determinant of Attribution for Success and Failure," Sex Roles 3 (1977), 301-314.

⁷⁴J.G. Simon and N.T. Feather, "Causal Attributions for Success and Failure at University Examinations," Journal of Educational Psychology 64, (1973), 47.

A questionnaire given to two hundred ninety-six undergraduates before and after taking an exam revealed that subjects who passed the exam had high ratings of initial confidence and higher ratings of prior knowledge than did subjects who failed the exam. In addition,

". . . subjects who passed the exam attached more importance to ability as a causal factor in their outcome than subjects who failed the exam."⁷⁵ They found that males rated their abilities higher than females.

Females who failed the exam rated their abilities low, and they also attached more importance to luck and task difficulty as factors which affected their outcome.

Simon and Feather contended that the lack of significance among females was the result of cultural role expectations; they state:

These sex differences were interpreted in terms of differences in the way subjects conceive of sex roles in our culture, according to which the female should appear more dependent and less assertive than the male. . . these findings reinforce the conception of females as more likely than males to view their fate as being determined by external factors.⁷⁶

Attribution theory rests on the premise that students attribute success and failure to stable and unstable dimension of ability and effort based upon their desire to achieve or avoid failure. Research studies confirm the importance of the stability dimension in

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 47.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 55.

understanding persistence and avoidance behavior. Studies indicate that high achievers tend to attribute failure to the unstable dimensions of effort while low achievers attribute failure to the stable dimension of lack of ability. The latter results in a lack of persistence at a difficult task and an unwillingness to try. The task becomes unattractive because it may result in failure. The following section presents research in education relation related to attribution theory, achievement motivation, and reading among young children.

Attribution, Achievement Motivation, and Reading

This section presents the research studies concerning behaviors related to achievement motivation and their effect upon achievement performance. Only two studies utilizing attribution theory investigated the effect of attribution retraining on persistent behavior.

Crandall, Katkovsky, Preston investigated the relationship between children's achievement motivation, attitude, and performance in several achievement situations. Utilizing the Thematic Apperception Test, Manifest Anxiety Scale, and the Intellectual Achievement Responsibility Questionnaire, the researchers tested twenty boys and twenty girls from first, second, and third grades. All but two of the children were intellectually superior to national norms as evidenced by IQ's of over 100. They found that: (1) girls attached more importance to

intellectual competence than did boys and (2) the girls tended to assign responsibility to themselves. No differences existed between boys' and girls' stated expectations of success in intellectual situations, minimal standards applied to performance, and actual performance on intellectual and academic achievement tests.⁷⁷

The researchers found significant differences among children who had high expectations of success and held standards commensurate with their expected performances. They also found significant differences between intellectual attainment values and self-responsibility. Crandall, Katkovsky, and Preston state:

The higher the children's intellectual attainment value, the more likely they were to believe that they, rather than others, were responsible for the reinforcement which occurred in their everyday achievement efforts.⁷⁸

Friend and Neale investigated attributions of success and failure among children from different ethnic groups and social classes. They hypothesized that Black students have not learned to attribute success to internal factors and as a consequence, they did not consider these factors to be important. To test this hypothesis, they randomly assigned one hundred and twenty-

⁷⁷V. J. Crandall, W. Katkovsky, and A. Preston, "Motivational and Ability Determinants of Young Children's Intellectual Achievement Behaviors," Child Development 33 (1962), 652-653.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 654.

five fifth grade students to three conditions; one in which students received negative feedback, one in which they received positive feedback, and one in which they gave no feedback at all. They also divided the groups into middle-class Whites, middle-class Blacks, low-class Whites, and low-class Blacks. Students read a short paragraph and answered comprehension questions on the passage. They then received one of the three conditions and ranked the importance of the four causal factors in relationship to their performance. The researchers asked the students to predict which of these factors would influence their next reading.

Friend and Neale found no significant differences between race, social class, and feedback conditions. However, when they introduced attributions, a significant interaction effect occurred. The authors state, "The interaction indicated that subjects in the failure relative to success and no feedback condition attributed lower ability and lower effort to themselves."⁷⁹ The rank ordering of the causal factors in the success condition resulted in "65% of the White subjects as compared to 34% of the Black subjects identifying both ability and effort as their first two choices."⁸⁰

⁷⁹Ronald M. Friend and John M. Neale, "Children's Perceptions of Success and Failure: An Attributional Analysis of the Effect of Race and Social Class," Developmental Psychology 7 (1972), 126.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 126.

Chapin and Dyck investigated the aspects of reinforcement for children experiencing reading difficulties and attribution retraining. They identified thirty students from grades five, six, and seven who were reading below grade level as determined by McCracken's Standard Reading Inventory. They presented a schedule of attribution retraining to one group. Their findings indicate that children who receive the retraining, those taught to attribute failure to lack of effort rather than ability, developed more reading persistence than those students who did not receive the retraining.⁸¹

Carol Dweck hypothesized that, "A procedure which taught the helpless children to take responsibility for failure and to attribute it to lack of effort would result in improved performance following failure in critical situations."⁸² She divided students into two groups, control and experimental. The control group received success only feedback while the experimental group received an attribution retraining program. She found:

The children who were taught to attribute failure during training to insufficient effort were able to persist after failure in the test situation. Students in the success only group did not show any consistent improvement in their

⁸¹Mia Chapin and Dennis G. Dyck, "Persistence in Children's Reading-Behavior as a Function of N Length and Attribution Retraining," Journal of Abnormal Psychology 85 (1976), 512.

⁸²Carol S. Dweck, "The Role of Expectations and Attributions in Alleviation of Learned Helplessness," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 31 (1975), 683.

response to failure, but rather continued to display a marked impairment of performance following failure.⁸³

The research on attribution, motivation, and reading reveal that, (1) a relationship exists between expectations of success and performance, (2) students attribute failure in a reading situation to low effort and low ability when they receive no feedback about their reading behavior, and (3) attribution retraining affects students' persistence at difficult tasks.

Summary

This chapter reviewed research related to attitudes toward reading, particularly research into the relationship between attitudes toward reading and such factors as reading achievement, teaching approaches, sex differences, interest, socioeconomic status, and personality. Included was research related to attribution theory and the research related to the types of choices individuals identify as the reason for their success and failure.

The relationship between achievement and attitudes reveal that reading achievement influences attitudes toward reading. Research on teaching approaches and attitudes toward reading reveal that eclectic teaching approaches produce more positive effects on attitudes than do single approach methods. Sex differences were

⁸³Ibid., p. 683.

significantly related to attitudes; although, the reasons for those differences are only speculative. Research on interest and its effect on attitudes is minimal; only two studies exist which include an analysis of attitude in their research on interest. Research on the influence of socioeconomic status on attitudes toward reading is inconclusive; only two studies found a positive effect while five studies found no significant effect. Research on attitudes and personality revealed that retarded readers exhibit frustration and avoidance behaviors, and tend to attribute lack of ability as the reason for remedial reading.

Research on attitudes toward reading is scant and contradictory. It is impossible to state conclusively that the factors reviewed directly affect attitudes toward reading.

The research on attribution theory and its influence on the types of attributions made in a success and failure situation indicate that differences exist in terms of the type of attributions made by males and females. Coupled with achievement theory, research reveals that students high in achievement motivation made different types of attributions than did those low in achievement motivation.

Only two studies directly examined the effect of attribution theory on education. They found that attribution retraining influenced avoidance behavior in difficult tasks.

Based on the inconclusive findings in the research on attitudes toward reading and the effects of achievement motivation on the type of attributions made in a success and failure situation, it was hypothesized that a relationship exists between ethnicity, attributions of success and failure and attitudes toward reading. Chapter III presents the design and procedures for conducting this research.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this study was to identify whether ethnicity, attributions made in a successful reading situation, and attributions made in a failure reading situation, affect attitudes toward reading and achievement motivation among third grade males. This chapter includes the setting and sample, testing procedures, instruments utilized, and analysis of data.

Setting and Sample

Crooked Oak Elementary School and Millwood Elementary School located in Oklahoma City and four public schools in Lawton, Oklahoma provided the setting and sample for this study. The schools used in Lawton were Wilson Elementary School, Washington Elementary School, Roosevelt Elementary School, and Lincoln Elementary School. The six schools utilized for this study were and are classified as Title I schools.

Crooked Oak Public School is an independent school district in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, located in the southeast side of the city, south of the Canadian River. Located in an industrial area, its south boundary

is called "Oiler's Road" because of the type of industry located there. Although integrated now, Crooked Oak Elementary School was an all White school until the early seventies, until new housing projects forced integration. The ethnic population at the time of this study was approximately forty percent Black, forty-eight percent White, and two percent other.

Crooked Oak Elementary School has less than 1000 students and is known as a school without a community. There are no civic organizations, community radio stations, newspapers, community centers, or libraries located in this area to identify with Crooked Oak School. The school population is decreasing for the following reasons: (1) young people and couples are not moving into the community, (2) houses that become available for sale are generally purchased by industry, and (3) because of the industrial influence, property is too expensive to be purchased for residential homes. Over ninety percent of the students qualify for the free lunch program causing the school to qualify for Title I funds.

Millwood Elementary School is also an independent school district located in the northeast part of Oklahoma City. It has as its boundaries NE 50th on the south, Britton Road on the north, I-35 interstate on the east, and Kelly Road on the west. Millwood is a school district with less than 1500 students. Historically an all

White school with grades one through six, Millwood is now a kindergarten through twelfth grade school consisting of a ninety-eight percent Black and two percent White population. The ethnic population of the school changed during the seventies. It, too, is classified as a Title I school.

Lawton, Oklahoma is a city with a population of approximately 90,000. It is located in the south central part of the state. Lawton has a military base which provides a mixed population for the city and the schools. All four of the schools used in Lawton were Title I schools. The school population reflects the diversity of ethnic groups in the community. Lincoln Elementary school, for example, had twenty-nine Hispanic students, thirty Black students, seventeen Native-American students, one Oriental student, and two hundred and twenty-three students classified as other. The population of the other three schools, Wilson, Washington, and Roosevelt, consisted of approximately the same ethnic diversity.

In the majority of studies involving attitudes toward reading, males consistently had lower attitudes toward reading than did females and a change of attitudes seemed to occur in the fourth and fifth grade. For this reason, only third grade male students from the six schools identified were selected for this study. The researcher contacted and informed principals and teachers about the research project. Principals and

teachers granted permission to conduct the research in their schools and classrooms.

All the third grade males in the six schools formed the population for this study. There were a total of ninety students examined. Five students were eliminated from the study due to inappropriate markings on either the attitude scale which the student filled out or the motivation scale filled out by the teachers. The ethnic distribution consisted of forty Black students, thirty White students, and fifteen Chicano students.

Testing Procedures

Students from each of the third grades were taken as a group either to an empty classroom or to a section of the library and administered the Heathington Attitude Scale (Appendix A) which measured attitudes toward reading. The researcher read the questions to the students and asked them to mark the face which most appropriately reflected their feelings toward reading in a particular circumstance. The researcher informed the students there were twenty questions about reading and they were to mark the face which reflected their feelings about reading. The researcher read the following statement out loud to the students;

Beside each number are 5 faces; a very unhappy face, an unhappy face, a face that's neither happy nor unhappy, a happy face, and a very happy face. I will ask you how you feel about reading and you will put an "X" on the face that shows how you feel.

The researcher asked the students to be very honest about their feelings because their answers would be confidential. The teachers left the room during the administration of this scale. After the attitude scale was administered, the researcher informed the students that they would be asked to read individually for the researcher sometime during that week. The following day, students came individually into a room provided by the principal. The rooms provided for testing were generally adjacent to the teacher's lounge. They were generally small, and equipped with a long table and chairs. They did, however, provide the privacy conducive for testing.

After a brief conversation about school and the student's interests, the student read several stories from the Standard Reading Inventory.¹ The researcher informed the student to try and figure out the word or words he did not know by himself. All students received the same instructions.

Each student began reading at the first grade reading level of the Standard Reading Inventory so that his independent reading level might be determined and also to provide success on his first reading. Once the student read at his independent level without the aid of the researcher, the researcher asked him to indicate why

¹Robert A. McCracken, Standard Reading Inventory (Oregon: Klamath, 1963).

he read so well. The student identified the reason from one of two cards, on one card was written "Ability-I knew I could do it" and on the other card was written "Effort-I tried hard." The student selected one of the two cards as the reason for his success. The student continued reading until he reached his frustration reading level at which time he selected from two cards the reason for his failure to read as well as he had read before. Written on these two cards were, "Ability-I can't do it" and "Effort-I didn't try hard." All students followed the same process.

Before the testing of students took place, teachers received the Achievement Motivation Scale² (Appendix B). In only one school, Crooked Oak Elementary School, was it possible to explain the scale to all the third grade teachers at once. At each of the other schools, the researcher explained the scale individually to each of the teachers. The teachers received as much time as they needed to fill out the scale.

Instruments Utilized

Since achievement motivation does not confine itself to the academic setting alone but exists in an individual's attitude toward achieving some goal which may be social, personal, or academic, and since achieve-

²This scale was developed by this researcher based on the work of Atkinson and McClelland cited later in this chapter.

ment motivation in many of the attribution studies indicated that high achievers attributed success to ability and failure to lack of effort while low achievers attributed failure to lack of ability, the researcher designed a Likert scale of behavior typical of high and low achievers to be presented to teachers. Because of the ambiguity involved in the concept of achievement motivation, the researcher provided concrete examples of various types of achievement motivation behavior in and outside of the classroom in order to acquaint the teachers with the concept. A list of the behaviors associated with achievement motivation based on the work of Atkinson and McClelland³ and included in the scale are as follows:

1. Individuals are interested in excellence for its own sake.
2. Individuals have a good idea of their ability and picks tasks at which they can succeed at least half of the time.
3. Individuals like to control their own destiny rather than leave things up to fate, luck, chance, or other people.
4. Individuals pick experts rather than friends as work partners.
5. Individuals like to make independent judgments based on their own evaluation and experience rather than relying on the opinions of others.
6. Individuals persist at difficult tasks.

³D. D. McClelland and J. W. Atkinson and others, The Achievement Motive (New York: Appleton, 1955).

7. Individuals are more concerned with medium to long range goals.
8. Individuals do not manifest stress under test conditions or difficult work.
9. Individuals are able to concentrate with greater intensity on tasks.

The Standard Reading Inventory developed by McCracken in 1963 is used in both clinical and classroom settings in order to establish reading achievement at pre-primer through seventh grade reader levels. This test measures a student's instructional, independent, and frustration reading level in oral and silent reading. There are two equivalent forms of this test; however, this study used only form A to identify the oral independent and frustration reading levels.

This instrument measures four areas of reading achievement. They are: vocabulary in isolation and in context, oral reading, comprehension, and speed. Each form of the test contains eleven word lists which measure pronunciation ability in isolation. There are eleven stories for oral reading and eight stories for silent reading. These stories vary in length from forty seven to one hundred and forty-one words.

The researcher used only two sub-tests of the Standard Reading Inventory to identify the independent and frustration reading level. They were: vocabulary in context and oral comprehension. The rationale used for the selection of the two sub-tests was based on the

research of Kenneth Goodman. He found that students were able to recognize words in context that they were not able to recognize in isolation.⁴

McCracken obtained content and concurrent validity and reliability for this test. He obtained content validity in the area of vocabulary control, sentence length, content, and general style by using three basal reading series from which to draw vocabulary, content, style, and general sentence length. Further evidence of validity was established by testing 664 children in grades one through six in terms of the stories and word lists. McCracken also secured ratings on this test from experts in the field.

Two studies established concurrent validity.

McCracken states:

The instructional reading level of the Standard Reading Inventory and the California Reading Test were compared for 79 children completing second grade. The correlation was .87. The results of the reading comprehension and reading vocabulary sections of the Stanford Achievement Test and the Standard Reading Inventory were compared for 77 children completing third grade. The correlations were .77 between the Stanford comprehension and the S.R.I. instructional reading level, and .88 between the vocabulary measures.⁵

McCracken established reliability by having sixty children, thirty boys and thirty girls take both forms

⁴Kenneth S. Goodman, "Reading: A Psycholinguistic Guessing Game," Journal of the Reading Specialist 4 (May 1967), 126-135.

⁵McCracken, Standard Reading Inventory, pp. 41-42.

of the Standard Reading Inventory. A Pearson product-moment correlation for the reliability of both forms ranged from .86 to .91.

Heathington developed the Heathington Attitude Scale⁶ in 1975. She obtained the items for this scale through interviews with sixty children from grades one through six. She asked students to identify various attitudes held by other students their age about reading in the classroom, organized reading in the classroom, reading in the library, reading at home, other recreational reading, and reading in general.

Through her interviews, she discovered that students' perceptions of reading behaviors differed between primary and intermediate students. As a result of her interviews, she developed two attitude scales, one for the primary level, grades one through three and one for the intermediate level, grades four through six. For diagnostic purposes, Heathington identified certain questions which could be grouped and evaluated separately for specific attitudes toward reading. For this study, the researcher analyzed only two area of attitudes held about reading; they were: organized reading in the classroom and reading in general. Questions on the scale which specifically address themselves to organized

⁶Betty S. Heathington, "The Development of Scales to Measure Attitudes Toward Reading," (PhD. dissertation, University of Tennessee, 1975).

reading in the classroom were 4, 7, 8, and 13. Items 10, 11, 14, and 20 addressed attitudes toward general reading.

Heathington established reliability and validity for this instrument. She used test-retest to establish reliability. At the primary level, she tested and retested 1245 students. She obtained a correlation of .73 for the reliability between the two testing situations.

She established validity through the use of item analysis. Item analysis also determined whether the items were discriminating between the positive and negative attitudes indicated by the respondents. A t-test between the means of the two groups confirmed the validity of the items. The fact that she obtained the items from respondents for whom the scale was intended provides further evidence of the validity of the scale.

Analysis of Data

The data collected for each subject included: (1) the scores obtained on the Heathington Attitude Scale for organized reading in the classroom and general reading, (2) scores obtained on the teacher rated Achievement Motivation Scale, (3) attribution scores to ability or effort in a success condition, and (4) attribution scores to ability or effort in a failure condition.

Since hypotheses one through nine require the comparison of three different groups, the researcher selected one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) as the

proper statistical test. The choice of this statistical analysis provides a method of comparing group means to determine whether significant differences exist between groups.

In addition, the researcher used a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) to test the effect of the three independent variables, ethnicity, attributions of success, and attributions of failure on attitudes toward organized reading in the classroom, general reading, and achievement motivation. Multivariate Analysis of Variance was chosen for the following reasons:

1. The MANOVA analyzes the effect of two or more dependent variables when used at the same time.
2. The interaction effect attributable to the combination of the independent variables is beyond that which can be obtained when the variables are examined separately. A significant interaction effect for the total group would indicate a significant effect on at least some of the variables.
3. MANOVA examines the independent variables separately as it examines the combined effects.

Chapter IV presents the results of these statistical calculations. The results of the analysis serve as the basis for inferences concerning the influence of ethnicity, attributions of success, and attributions of failure on attitudes toward reading and achievement motivation.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The population for this study consisted of eighty-five third grade males from six elementary schools in central Oklahoma. The Heathington Reading Attitude Scale measured students' likes and dislikes toward reading. Attitudes toward reading in general and attitudes toward organized classroom reading were the two areas singled out for analyses. To assess the type of attributions made in success and failure reading situations, each student read passages from the Standard Reading Inventory and indicated at the independent and frustration reading level whether ability or effort caused them to read successfully or unsuccessfully.

An analysis was made of the participant's response to the attitude scale for organized reading in the classroom and reading in general and the scores received by each participant on the Achievement Motivation Questionnaire through the use of multivariate analysis of variance. There were three levels for the first factor (ethnicity), two levels for the second factor (attributions made in a success situation), and

two levels for the third factor (attributions made in a failure situation). A $3 \times 2 \times 2$ MANOVA analyzed the scores on the Achievement Motivation Scale, the reading attitude scale for reading in general, and reading attitudes for organized reading in the classroom. This study generated twelve hypotheses to be tested at the .05 level of significance. The researcher analyzed the twelve hypotheses in groups of four since each independent variable was analyzed against each independent variable.

Testing Hypotheses H_{01} , H_{02} , H_{03} , H_{04}

In order to test the hypotheses which dealt with the first dependent variable, attitudes toward organized reading in the classroom, an analysis of variance was computed. Tables 3, 4, and 5 present the descriptive statistics for the first three hypotheses. Table 6 presents the analysis of variance for H_{01} , - H_{04} .

An ANOVA was computed for the four hypotheses to examine the main and interaction effect of the three independent variables on the dependent variable, attitudes toward organized reading in the classroom. The results of these analyses show no significant main effect for ethnicity, attributions made in a success situation, and attributions made in a failure situation. In addition, there was no significant interaction effect among the three independent variables. H_{01} , H_{02} , H_{03} , and H_{04} could not be rejected.

TABLE 3

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS
OF ATTITUDE SCORES FOR ORGANIZED READING
IN THE CLASSROOM WHEN GROUPED BY ETHNICITY

Black Subjects (N = 40)	White Subjects (N = 30)	Chicano Subjects (N = 15)
$\bar{X} = 14.82$ sd = 3.44	$\bar{X} = 15.71$ sd = 3.58	$\bar{X} = 14.84$ sd = 3.24

TABLE 4

OF ATTRIBUTION SCORES TO ABILITY OR EFFORT
IN A SUCCESS SITUATION WHEN GROUPED BY ETHNICITY

	Black Subjects (N = 40)	White Subjects (N = 30)	Chicano Subjects (N = 15)
Ability	$\bar{X} = 16.3$ sd = 3.18 (n = 17)	$\bar{X} = 16.2$ sd = 3.39 (n = 11)	$\bar{X} = 13.4$ sd = 4.23 (n = 5)
Effort	$\bar{X} = 13.73$ sd = 3.60 (n = 23)	$\bar{X} = 15.47$ sd = 3.70 (n = 19)	$\bar{X} = 15.60$ sd = 2.75 (n = 5)

TABLE 5

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF ATTRIBUTION
SCORES TO ABILITY OR EFFORT IN A FAILURE SITUATION
WHEN GROUPED BY ETHNICITY

	Black Subjects (N = 40)	White Subjects (N = 30)	Chicano Subjects (N = 15)
Lack of Ability	$\bar{X} = 16.6$ sd = 3.0 (n = 12)	$\bar{X} = 14.3$ sd = 3.7 (n = 12)	$\bar{X} = 15.4$ sd = 2.4 (n = 5)
Lack of Effort	$\bar{X} = 14.8$ sd = 3.6 (n = 28)	$\bar{X} = 16.4$ sd = 3.5 (n = 18)	$\bar{X} = 14.6$ sd = 3.7 (n = 10)

TABLE 6

ANOVA SUMMARY COMPARING INTERACTION OF ETHNICITY,
ATTRIBUTIONS OF SUCCESS, ATTRIBUTIONS OF FAILURE
AND ATTITUDES TOWARD ORGANIZED READING IN THE CLASSROOM

Source of Variation	df	SS	MS	F
Ethnicity (ET)	2	15.63	7.81	0.61
Success (SU)	1	23.87	23.87	1.87
Failure (FA)	1	3.72	3.72	0.29
ET X SU	2	59.56	29.78	2.34
ET X FA	2	21.16	10.58	0.83
SU X FA	1	8.92	8.92	0.70
ET X SU X FA	2	42.34	21.17	1.66
ERROR	73	929.77	12.73	
TOTAL	84	1105.01		

Although no significant ethnic group differences existed between the attributions made in a success and failure reading situation, the data reveal that over half of the students in each ethnic group identified effort as the reason for success. Lack of effort was also identified as the reason for failure.

Testing Hypotheses Ho_5 , Ho_6 , Ho_7 , Ho_8

In order to test the hypotheses which dealt with the second dependent variable, attitudes toward general reading, an analysis of variance was computed. Tables 7, 8, and 9 present the descriptive statistics for Ho_5 - Ho_7 . Table 10 presents the analysis of variance for Ho_5 - Ho_8 .

The ANOVA computed for these hypotheses examined the main and interaction effect of the three independent variables on the second dependent variable, attitudes toward general reading. This analyses revealed no significant main effect for the three independent variables nor no significant interaction effect among the independent variables. Ho_5 , Ho_6 , Ho_7 , and Ho_8 could not be rejected.

Testing Hypotheses Ho_9 , Ho_{10} , Ho_{11} , Ho_{12}

In order to test the hypotheses which dealt with the third dependent variable, achievement motivation, an analysis of variance was computed. Descriptive statistics for

TABLE 7

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF ATTITUDE SCORES
FOR GENERAL READING WHEN GROUPED BY ETHNICITY

Black Subjects (N = 40)	White Subjects (N = 30)	Chicano Subjects (N = 15)
$\bar{X} = 16.74$	$\bar{X} = 17.26$	$\bar{X} = 16.06$
sd = 2.61	sd = 2.55	sd = 2.63

TABLE 8

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR ATTRIBUTIONS
MADE IN SUCCESSFUL READING SITUATIONS AND ATTITUDES
TOWARD READING IN GENERAL WHEN GROUPED
BY ETHNIC GROUP

	Black Subjects (N = 40)	White Subjects (N = 30)	Chicano Subjects (N = 15)
Ability	$\bar{X} = 16.9$	$\bar{X} = 17.1$	$\bar{X} = 14.8$
	sd = 1.9	sd = 2.4	sd = 3.4
	(n = 17)	(n = 11)	(n = 5)
Effort	$\bar{X} = 16.5$	$\bar{X} = 17.0$	$\bar{X} = 16.7$
	sd = 3.0	sd = 2.7	sd = 2.2
	(n = 23)	(n = 19)	(n = 10)

TABLE 9

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF ATTRIBUTION
SCORES TO ABILITY OR EFFORT IN A FAILURE SITUATION
WHEN GROUPED BY ETHNICITY

	Black Subjects (N = 40)	White Subjects (N = 30)	Chicano Subjects (N = 15)
Lack of Ability	$\bar{X} = 16.0$ sd = 2.8 (n = 12)	$\bar{X} = 16.2$ sd = 2.5 (n = 12)	$\bar{X} = 17.0$ sd = .6 (n = 5)
Lack of Effort	$\bar{X} = 17.1$ sd = 2.3 (n = 28)	$\bar{X} = 17.7$ sd = 2.6 (n = 18)	$\bar{X} = 15.6$ sd = 2.8 (n = 12)

TABLE 10

ANOVA SUMMARY COMPARING INTERACTION OF ETHNICITY
ATTRIBUTIONS OF SUCCESS, ATTRIBUTIONS OF FAILURE
ATTITUDES TOWARD READING IN GENERAL

Source of Variation	df	SS	MS	F
Ethnicity (ET)	2	10.67	5.33	0.70
Success (SU)	1	0.03	0.03	0.00
Failure (FA)	1	8.62	8.66	1.14
ET X SU	2	13.96	6.98	0.92
ET X FA	2	19.97	9.98	1.32
SU X FA	1	0.53	0.53	0.07
ET X SU X FA	2	16.66	8.33	1.10
Error	73	553.34	7.58	
Total	84	623.81		

H_{o_9} , $H_{o_{10}}$, and $H_{o_{11}}$ are presented in Tables 11, 12, and 13. Table 14 presents the analysis of variance for $H_{o_9} - H_{o_{12}}$.

The ANOVA computed for $H_{o_9} - H_{o_{12}}$ which examined the main and interaction effect of the three independent variables on the third dependent variable, achievement motivation, reveal no significant main effect for the three independent variables. The analyses also revealed no significant interaction effect among the independent variables. As a result of these analyses, H_{o_9} , $H_{o_{10}}$, $H_{o_{11}}$, and $H_{o_{12}}$ could not be rejected.

The use of Wilks Lambda to test the multivariate analysis of variance for no significant effect for ethnicity, attributions of success, and attributions of failure resulted in a lack of significance for these three factors. The F value for ethnicity was 0.37, for attribution of success was 0.94, and for attributions of failure was 0.51.

Summary

Eight-five third grade male students from six schools in central Oklahoma were the subjects for this study. Scores used for analyses were obtained from the Heathington Attitude Scale and the Achievement Motivation Scale. Analyses of variance was used to test the twelve hypotheses generated for this study. None of the resulting F values were strong enough to be significant; as a result of the analyses, the

TABLE 11

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF ACHIEVEMENT
MOTIVATION SCORES WHEN GROUPED BY ETHNICITY

Black Subjects (N = 40)	White Subjects (N = 30)	Chicano Subjects (N = 15)
$\bar{X} = 31.99$	$\bar{X} = 33.86$	$\bar{X} = 34.53$
sd = 6.83	sd = 12.31	sd = 7.69

TABLE 12

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR ATTRIBUTIONS
IN A SUCCESSFUL READING SITUATION AND ACHIEVEMENT
MOTIVATION WHEN SUBJECTS ARE GROUPED
BY ETHNICITY

	Black Subjects (N = 40)	White Subjects (N = 30)	Chicano Subjects (N = 15)
Ability	$\bar{X} = 31.7$	$\bar{X} = 38.9$	$\bar{X} = 36.2$
	sd = 11.0	sd = 14.2	sd = 4.0
	(n = 17)	(n = 11)	(n = 5)
Effort	$\bar{X} = 36.7$	$\bar{X} = 31.4$	$\bar{X} = 33.7$
	sd = 10.2	sd = 11.2	sd = 9.6
	(n = 23)	(n = 19)	(n = 12)

TABLE 13

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR ATTRIBUTIONS
MADE IN A FAILURE READING SITUATION AND ACHIEVEMENT
MOTIVATION WHEN SUBJECTS ARE GROUPED
BY ETHNICITY

	Black Subjects (N = 40)	White Subjects (N = 30)	Chicano Subjects (N = 15)
Lack of Ability	$\bar{X} = 32.07$ sd = 11.5 (N = 12)	$\bar{X} = 35.3$ sd = 13.7 (N = 12)	$\bar{X} = 30.6$ sd = 9.8 (N = 5)
Lack of Effort	$\bar{X} = 35.7$ sd = 10.1 (N = 28)	$\bar{X} = 33.4$ sd = 11.4 (N = 18)	$\bar{X} = 39.5$ sd = 6.69 (N = 10)

TABLE 14

ANOVA SUMMARY COMPARING INTERACTION DIMENSIONS OF ETHNICITY,
ATTRIBUTIONS OF SUCCESS, ATTRIBUTIONS OF
FAILURE AND ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION

Source of Variation	df	SS	MS	F
Ethnicity (ET)	2	3.39	1.69	0.01
Success (SU)	1	6.70	6.70	0.05
Failure (FA)	1	70.20	70.20	0.57
ET X SU	2	652.38	326.19	2.65
ET X FA	2	181.62	90.81	0.74
SU X FA	1	476.40	476.40	3.87
ET X SU X FA	2	216.00	108.00	8.88
Error	73	8978.15	122.98	
Total	84	10573.87		

twelve hypotheses could not be rejected.

Based on the findings in this chapter, conclusions, recommendations, and implications for further research are presented in Chapter V.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter consists of a summary of the research conducted in this study, conclusions, and recommendations. Included in the summary are the specific intent of this research and the statistical results obtained from the hypotheses formulated for this research. The conclusions include inferences which can be drawn from the findings. Recommendations include implications for teachers, teacher educators, and other researchers interested in this topic.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine whether ethnicity, attributions made in a successful reading situation, and attributions made in a failure reading situation affected attitudes toward reading and achievement motivation. Eighty-five third grade males from six elementary schools, two in Oklahoma City and four in Lawton, Oklahoma, comprised the population for this study. The ethnic distribution of students utilized in this study was forty Black student, thirty White students, and fifteen Chicano students.

Students were administered the Heathington Attitude Scale to obtain attitudes toward organized reading in the classroom and reading in general. Students read from the Standard Reading Inventory in order to establish their independent and frustration reading level. The independent reading level represented a success reading situation. The frustration reading level represented a failure reading situation. Students attributed their success or failure to effort or ability in each of the reading situations. Teachers identified their students as being high or low in achievement motivation through the Achievement Motivation Scale.

Twelve hypotheses were tested with a 3 X 2 X 2 factorial analysis of variance and a multivariate analysis of variance of the three independent variables on the three dependent variables. Significance for either accepting or rejecting the stated null hypotheses was set at the .05 level. An analysis of the data resulted in the following findings:

1. In hypotheses H_{01} , H_{02} , H_{03} , and H_{04} which dealt with the effects of ethnicity, attributions of success to effort or ability, and attributions of failure to effort or ability on attitudes toward organized reading in the classroom showed no significant main or interaction effect. These hypotheses were not rejected.

2. In hypotheses Ho_5 , Ho_6 , Ho_7 , and Ho_8 dealing with the effects of ethnicity, attributions of success to effort or ability, and attributions of failure to effort or ability on attitudes toward reading in general, no significant main or interaction effects was found. These hypotheses were not rejected.

3. In hypotheses Ho_9 , Ho_{10} , Ho_{11} , and Ho_{12} dealing with ethnicity, attributions of success to effort or ability, and attributions of failure to effort or ability on achievement motivation, no significant main or interaction effects was found. These hypotheses were not rejected.

Although all of the hypotheses in this study failed to be rejected, inferences can be made on the data obtained. The following section presents these inferences and conclusions.

Conclusions

This section presents four conclusions based on the analysis of the data obtained in this study:

1. Although no significant differences existed between Black, White, and Chicano third grade males in their attitudes toward reading in the classroom, attitudes towards reading in general, and scores received on the achievement motivation scale, this lack of signifi-

cance is important. The lack of significance indicated that (1) ethnicity does not affect attitudes toward reading, at least for this population, and (2) teachers do not identify need for achievement on the basis of ethnicity. Two of the studies cited in Chapter II, Greenburg et al., and Friend and Neale, made assumptions on the basis of ethnicity; they were: (1) Black students had more negative attitudes because of the low achievement scores they received on national achievement tests, and (2) Black students have not learned to attribute success to themselves (ability). This study offers evidence that Black students do not differ from students from other ethnic groups on their attitudes toward reading or on the types of attributions made in a success and failure situation.

2. No significant differences existed between the type of attributions made to ability or effort in a success reading situation. Although not significant, over half of the students attributed their success in reading to effort rather than ability. Fifty-two identified effort as the reason for their success: thirty-three identified ability as the reason for their success. Two inferences are immediately apparent: (1) effort

plays an important function in both success situations and (2) teachers strongly encourage effort in the classroom.

3. No significant differences existed between the type of attributions made to ability or effort in a failure reading situation. Although not significant, over half of the students identified lack of effort as the reason for their inability to read and comprehend at their frustration reading level. Fifty-six students identified lack of effort and twenty-nine identified lack of ability as the reason for their failure. The inference made in this situation is that over half of these students will persist at a reading task which is difficult for them since, according to attribution theorists the lack of effort attribution is interpretable as, "I just need to try harder."
4. No significant interaction existed between the dimensions of ethnicity, attributions of success and attributions of failure. The conclusions on this point is that at least half of the students from the Black culture, White culture, and Chicano culture make the same type of attributions in success and failure situations.

Recommendations

Presented in this section are the recommendations based on the findings and conclusions of this study. These recommendations address themselves to teachers, teacher educators, and researchers.

Recommendations for Teachers

Teachers who deal with Black, White, and Chicano populations in their classroom should re-evaluate their views on ethnicity as a factor in explaining students' attitudes toward reading. In addition, teachers should not consider ethnicity as a factor involved in attributions made in a success and failure situation. Teachers should note the type of attributions being made by children to explain their success and failure in reading. Knowledge of students' attributions may explain their lack of persistence on difficult reading tasks.

Recommendations for Teacher Educators

Based on the findings of this study, teacher educators should provide the knowledge to teachers and prospective teachers that ethnicity does not affect students' attitudes toward reading. A presentation of these findings can limit the stereotypes held about Blacks and Chicanos in particular. Teacher educators should provide teachers and prospective teachers with knowledge about the type of attributions made in success and failure reading situations and their possible effects upon behavior.

Recommendations for Researchers

Researchers interested in the areas of reading attitudes, ethnicity, achievement motivation, and attribution theory should replicate this study to confirm or contradict the findings of this study. Replication of this study should be conducted within the classroom atmosphere. Different attributions may result when peers and teachers are present.

A comparison of teacher and student identification of need for achievement should be examined in order to determine if there is a difference between teachers' perception of achievement motivation and students' perception of achievement motivation.

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APPENDIX A

HEATHINGTON ATTITUDE SCALE

HOW DO YOU FEEL...

1. when you go to the library?



2. when you read instead of playing outside?



3. when you read a book in free time?



4. when you are in reading group?



5. when you read instead of watching TV?



6. when you read to someone at home?



7. about the stories in your reading book?



8. when you read out loud in class?



9. when you read with a friend after school?



10. when you read stories in books?



11. when you read in a quiet place?



12. when you read a story at bedtime?



13. when it's time for reading circle (group)?



14. when you read on a trip?



15. when you have lots of books at home?



16. when you read outside when it's warm?



17. when you read at your desk at school?



18. when you find a book at the library?



19. when you read in your room at home?



20. when you read instead of coloring?



APPENDIX B

Achievement Motivation Scale

Student Name _____ Student No. _____

1. The student has the ability to work at a task
(academic or social)

independent 5 4 3 2 1 not independent

2. The student works on a task because he is

interested
in excellence 5 4 3 2 1 told to
do so

3. The student is able to concentrate on what he does.

good
concentra- 5 4 3 2 1 poor
tion concentration

4. The student works on a task because he knows he'll
need to know that task when he gets older or when he
gets to another grade.

long term 5 4 3 2 1 short term
gratification gratification

5. He picks task that he can succeed at at least half of
the time.

almost 5 4 3 2 1 almost
always never

6. The student can accomplish reasonably difficult tasks
most of the time without the help of others.

most
of the 5 4 3 2 1 almost
time never

7. The student makes judgments based on his own evalua-
tions and experiences rather than relying on the
opinion of others.

most
of the 5 4 3 2 1 almost
time never